

**Community Collaboration Work Group**  
**Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, February 1, 2012; 7:30 a.m.  
Room 310 - County Administration Building

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chair Jim Saalfeld; County Commissioners Carol Hennessy, Dan Koorndyk and Mike Wawee Jr., City Commissioners Rosalynn Bliss and Jim White, President – Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce Rick Baker, Grand Rapids Township Supervisor Mike DeVries, President & CEO of The Right Place Inc. Birgit Klohs, Professor of Economics Paul Isely and President & CEO of the Hispanic Center of Western Michigan Maria Gonzalez-Cortes

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Attorney Jim Brown, Walker City Manager Cathy Vander Meulen; City Commissioner Jim White

**ALSO PRESENT:** Assistant Administrator Mary Swanson; Fiscal Services Director Stephen Duarte; Executive Assistant to the Board Jamie Groom; Corporate Counsel Dan Ophoff; Management Analyst Jen DeHaan; Commissioner Harold Mast; City Manager Greg Sundstrom; Deputy City Manager Eric DeLong; Director Bureau of Equalization Matt Woolford, State Business Ombudsmen MEDC Amy Banninga, Scott Atchison

**NEWS MEDIA:** David Czurak Grand Rapids Business Journal

Mr. Saalfeld called the meeting to order at 7:34 a.m.

I. Mr. Saalfeld welcomed the group and reviewed the meeting's objectives.

II. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT PRIMER**

Mr. DeVries delivered a comprehensive overview of the development of township government in Michigan and Kent County. He then covered some key responsibilities of townships in Michigan. Townships are required to perform assessment administration, tax collection and elections administration. Michigan townships are statutory units of government, having only those powers expressly provided or fairly implied by state law. Townships may choose to perform numerous governmental functions, including enacting and enforcing ordinances, planning and zoning, fire and police protection, cemeteries, parks and recreation facilities and programs, and many more.

Mr. Baker asked for clarification as to the overlap of Cities and Townships.

Mr. DeVries clarified that when cities grow, townships shrink. However, villages are functions of townships and do overlap - though they do not provide the same services.

Ms. Bliss delivered an overview of City government based on her knowledge of the City of Grand Rapids. She stated that there are nine cities throughout Kent County. Service provisions in each city are different based on population and needs.

Ms. Bliss distributed a handout, "General Operating Fund Analysis." She noted that revenue streams are very different amongst the cities. The City of Grand Rapids gets money from income tax (where it can levy up to 1.5 % for residents and .75% for non-residents), revenue sharing, property taxes (11% belongs to Grand Rapids) and enterprise funds (dedicated funding, not funded by general tax revenues).

Ms. Bliss distributed two more handouts: "Grand Rapids City Planning Department" and one describing mandated services by "Federal, State Charter," "City Ordinance" or "Discretionary."

Mr. Koorndyk delivered an overview of County government. County government is an arm of the State government; many services are mandated. Statutes do not mandate the level of service the County provides; this is at the discretion of County Administration and elected officials. If a service is not mandated, the County must be enabled or authorized to provide it. Non-mandated services are considered discretionary services of the County and includes such items as the Parks, Zoo, and Prevention Initiative. The largest two departments at Kent County are the Sheriff's Department and the Health Department. To find out more, visit [www.accessKent.com](http://www.accessKent.com).

Mr. Koorndyk added that as an arm of the state, the County administers the Circuit Court. There are also enterprise funds such as the Gerald R. Ford International Airport, Department of Public Works where County Commissioners sit on their governing boards.

Mr. DeVries added that Vital Records and property mapping and description are services provided only by the County and not duplicative services with other units of government.

Mr. Saalfeld said that there is not a lot of duplication in services provided.

Ms. Bliss added that the County commissioners are elected on a partisan basis, whereas City Commissioners are considered non-partisan. The composition of elected bodies in cities are determined by their charters, and as such, may vary from city to city.

Mr. Saalfeld noted that this work group will be looking at effectiveness, efficiencies and economic development and whether cooperation, collaboration or consolidation can get us there.

Mr. Saalfeld said that the summary of basic services of governments will be handed out at the next meeting. They will be divided into six to seven categories and the work group will go through each category in its subsequent meetings.

Mr. Saalfeld announced that the Community Collaboration Work Group's website is under construction and is aiming for a Friday, February 3, 2012, go-live date.

III. The next meeting is scheduled for March 7, 2012, at 7:30 am. An additional meeting will be added on March 21, 2012, at 7:30 am, and the April meeting will be held on April 11, 2012, 7:30 am.

Mr. Saalfeld adjourned the meeting at 8:37 am.